

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

I. – 70. (Canceled)

71. (New) A system for stabilizing a spine, comprising:
a first bone screw, said first bone screw comprising a threaded shank and a head;
a second bone screw, said second bone screw comprising a threaded shank and a head;
a first guide, said first guide being longer than the first bone screw and said first guide comprising;
 a first end comprising an engagement section, said engagement section being configured to detachably couple to the head of the first bone screw,
 a second end, wherein said second end extends away from the first bone screw when the first guide is detachably coupled to the head of the first bone screw,
a second guide, said second guide being longer than the second bone screw and said second guide comprising;
 a first end comprising an engagement section, said engagement section being configured to detachably couple to the head of the second bone screw,
 a second end, wherein said second end extends away from the second bone screw when the second guide is detachably coupled to the head of the second bone screw, and

a coupling mechanism, said coupling mechanism comprising;
an elongated member with a first end and a second end,
a first connector on the first end of said elongated member, and
a second connector on the second end of said elongated member,
wherein, in use, the first bone screw is attached to a first vertebra, the second bone screw is attached to a second vertebra, the first guide is detachably coupled to the head of the first bone screw, the second guide is detachably coupled to the head of the second bone screw, the first guide positions the first end of the elongated member to the head of the first bone screw, and the second guide positions the second end of the elongated member to the head of the second bone screw.

72. (New) The system of claim 71, wherein the first guide is flexible.

73. (New) The system of claim 71, wherein the first guide is rigid.

74. (New) The system of claim 71, wherein the elongated member is a rod.

75. (New) The system of claim 71, wherein the elongated member is dumbbell shaped.

76. (New) The system of claim 71, wherein the stiffness of the first guide varies along the length of the first guide.

77. (New) The system of claim 71, wherein the thickness of the first guide varies along the length of the first guide.

78. (New) The system of claim 71, wherein the engagement section of the first guide comprises threading, said threading configured to detachably couple the first guide to the first screw.

79. (New) The system of claim 71, further comprising a set screw, wherein the set screw inhibits movement of the elongated member relative to the first bone screw when engaged with the elongated member.

80. (New) The system of claim 71, further comprising a third bone screw, said third bone screw comprising a threaded shank and a head, and further comprising a third guide, said third guide comprising an engagement section on one end that is configured to detachably couple to the head of the third bone screw.

81. (New) A system for stabilizing a spine, comprising:
a first bone screw, said first bone screw comprising a threaded shank and a head;
a second bone screw, said second bone screw comprising a threaded shank and a head;
a first guide, said first guide being longer than the first bone screw and said first guide comprising;

a first end comprising an engagement section, said engagement section being configured to detachably couple to the head of the first bone screw,

a second end, wherein said second end extends away from the first bone screw when the first guide is detachably coupled to the head of the first bone screw,

a second guide, said second guide being longer than the second bone screw and said second guide comprising;

a first end comprising an engagement section, said engagement section being configured to detachably couple to the head of the second bone screw,

a second end, wherein said second end extends away from the second bone screw when the second guide is detachably coupled to the head of the second bone screw, and

a coupling mechanism, said coupling mechanism comprising an elongated member with a first end and a second end,

wherein, in use, the first bone screw is attached to a first vertebra, the second bone screw is attached to a second vertebra, the first guide is detachably coupled to the head of the first bone screw, the second guide is detachably coupled to the head of the second bone screw, the first guide positions the first end of the elongated member to the head of the first bone screw, and the second guide positions the second end of the elongated member to the head of the second bone screw.

82. (New) The system of claim 81, wherein the first guide is flexible.

83. (New) The system of claim 81, wherein the first guide is rigid.

84. (New) The system of claim 81, wherein the elongated member is a rod.

85. (New) The system of claim 81, wherein the elongated member is dumbbell shaped.

86. (New) The system of claim 81, wherein the stiffness of the first guide varies along the length of the first guide.

87. (New) The system of claim 81, wherein the thickness of the first guide varies along the length of the first guide.

88. (New) The system of claim 81, wherein the engagement section of the first guide comprises threading, said threading configured to detachably couple the first guide to the first screw.

89. (New) The system of claim 81, further comprising a set screw, wherein the set screw inhibits movement of the elongated member relative to the first bone screw when engaged with the elongated member.

90. (New) The system of claim 81, further comprising a third bone screw, said third bone screw comprising a threaded shank and a head, and further comprising a third guide, said third guide comprising an engagement section on one end that is configured to detachably couple to the head of the third bone screw.

91. (New) A system for stabilizing a spine, comprising:
a first bone screw, said first bone screw comprising a threaded shank and a head;
a second bone screw, said second bone screw comprising a threaded shank and a head;

a first guide, said first guide being longer than the first bone screw and said first guide comprising;

a first end comprising an engagement section, said engagement section being configured to detachably couple to the head of the first bone screw,

a second end, wherein said second end extends away from the first bone screw when the first guide is detachably coupled to the head of the first bone screw,

a second guide, said second guide being longer than the second bone screw and said second guide comprising;

a first end comprising an engagement section, said engagement section being configured to detachably couple to the head of the second bone screw,

a second end, wherein said second end extends away from the second bone screw when the second guide is detachably coupled to the head of the second bone screw, and

an elongated member with a first end and a second end,

wherein, in use, the first bone screw is attached to a first vertebra, the second bone screw is attached to a second vertebra, the first guide is detachably coupled to the head of the first bone screw, the second guide is detachably coupled to the head of the second bone screw, the first guide positions the first end of the elongated member to the head of the first bone screw, and the second guide positions the second end of the elongated member to the head of the second bone screw.

92. (New) The system of claim 91, wherein the first guide is flexible.

93. (New) The system of claim 91, wherein the first guide is rigid.

94. (New) The system of claim 91, wherein the elongated member is a rod.

95. (New) The system of claim 91, wherein the elongated member is dumbbell shaped.

96. (New) The system of claim 91, wherein the stiffness of the first guide varies along the length of the first guide.

97. (New) The system of claim 91, wherein the thickness of the first guide varies along the length of the first guide.

98. (New) The system of claim 91, wherein the engagement section of the first guide comprises threading, said threading configured to detachably couple the first guide to the first screw.

99. (New) The system of claim 91, further comprising a set screw, wherein the set screw inhibits movement of the elongated member relative to the first bone screw when engaged with the elongated member.

100. (New) The system of claim 91, further comprising a third bone screw, said third bone screw comprising a threaded shank and a head, and further comprising a third guide, said third guide comprising an engagement section on one end that is configured to detachably couple to the head of the third bone screw.